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STEREOTYPICAL IMAGES OF CHINESE CHARACTERS
IN HOLLYWOOD FILMS, 1910-2005

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Yu Chen

May 2006

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Diana Stover", written over a horizontal line.

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ABSTRACT

STEREOTYPICAL IMAGES OF CHINESE CHARACTERS IN HOLLYWOOD FILMS, 1910–2005

By Yu Chen

The purpose of this study was to examine 20 major Hollywood films, two per decade between 1910 and 2005, to determine how Chinese characters have been portrayed and how their portrayals have changed over time. The researcher examined the nature and purpose of stereotypes as well as interracial interactions and relationships depicted between Chinese and Caucasian characters to provide insights into the balance of power depicted in the films.

Previous studies on Chinese portrayals in Hollywood films were badly out of date, since films produced after 1970 have not been included in the analyses. The present study filled the gap in the literature since the analysis included more recently produced major Hollywood films as well as older ones. The most important finding of the study was that stereotypical characterizations have decreased over time to a point that, during the past decade, they have largely disappeared.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Ching Mai and Chia-lin Chen, for all of the support and encouragement they offered me during these years pursuing my degree in the United States.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Modern media have a great influence on people's daily lives. Young children are glued to television sets all day, and adults also spend many hours in front of their TVs, as well as relying on newspapers, magazines, and radios for information. In addition to communicating news, the media play a major role in shaping public attitudes and perceptions. Since people have only limited direct experience of the outside world, they must acquire much of their information, ideas, and opinions from the media (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995).

Since the 1940s, many scholars have examined the effects of the media on society (e.g., Turner & Surace, 1956; Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974; Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995). Through case studies, they have found that the media are most influential when they reinforce existing opinions rather than when they attempt to change opinions. In other words, the media have their greatest effect when they are used to reinforce and channel attitudes and opinions that are consistent with people's psychological makeup and the social structure of the groups with which they identify (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995).

One way that the media shape public opinion is by using stereotypes, in the sense coined by Walter Lippmann (1922)—that is, oversimplified standardized images of persons or groups. According to Rogers (1994), stereotypes are codes that simplify reality so that it can be conveyed more easily to others. As Rubin (1988) noted, “stereotyping is, in essence, the difference between the perceptions of outsiders and those

of insiders. Stereotypes can be positive, negative, or mixed” (p. 359).

Bandura (1971), a social learning theorist, asserted that repeated exposure to stereotypical portrayals results in viewers accepting the portrayals as reflective of reality. The repeated portrayal of stereotypes can perpetuate distorted views of minority groups. In addition, stereotypical portrayals can send signals to those groups that the host society is not interested in understanding their culture (Faber, O’Guinn, & Meyer, 1987).

Furthermore, studies show that negative, one-sided, or stereotyped media portrayals and news coverage reinforce racist attitudes in racist audiences, especially young ones, and can channel mass actions against the group that is stereotypically portrayed (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995).

Statement of Purpose

The primary purpose of this study is to examine Hollywood films to determine what Chinese stereotypes they have created; which of these stereotypes have been positive, negative, or mixed; and how these stereotypes have changed over time. The study begins with 1919, the year in which the first famous American dramatic film appeared in which a Chinese character played a significant role: D. W. Griffith’s second film, *Broken Blossoms*.

The study emphasizes the nature of the interracial interactions and relationships depicted between Chinese and Caucasian characters to develop insights into the balance of power depicted in the films.

The study not only discusses the nature and purpose of stereotypes and how they have affected American culture, but also includes a history of Chinese-Americans that

provides a background against which one can measure and understand the images found in films. The films chosen for examination all have at least one significant Chinese character in them and were all box office successes that had a powerful influence on the public of their day.

Significance of the Study

The issues of multiculturalism and gender nowadays have been given broader and more consistent attention than ever before in both the popular press and academic publications (Wilson & Gutierrez, 2003). The number of scholars who have turned their attention to the study of various disenfranchised groups and their relationships to mainstream communications have grown considerably. These efforts have broadened the discussion and had a favorable impact on the racial composition of the media workforce and product content (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995). Many scholars and professionals now recognize that understanding diversity is vital to understanding the field of communication. This study seeks to deepen that understanding by analyzing the developments of the portrayal of Chinese persons in films.

“When one talks of cinema, one talks of American cinema.... Every discussion of cinema made outside Hollywood must begin with Hollywood,” wrote the Brazilian avant-garde director Glauber Rocha (quoted in Moretti, 2001). The early motion picture inventor Thomas Edison wrote that “whoever controls the film industry controls the most powerful medium of influence over the public” (quoted in Noble, 1948, p. 9). Accordingly, most authorities feel that the cinema has the capacity to mold opinion through the ability of films, especially Hollywood films, to project certain accepted

attitudes (Lee, 1999).

James M. Jones (1972) defined the word *prejudice* as “a negative attitude toward a person or group based upon a social comparison process in which the individual’s own group is taken as the positive point of reference” (p. 3). In that context, the example would transmit not only the notion that the good (the dominant culture group) overcomes the bad (the socially subjected culture), but that the latter is evil. Thus, although stereotyping per se may have merits in popular literature and the media, when combined with prejudice, it poses a devastating obstacle to understanding and accepting members of non-dominant cultures in a multicultural society.

In addition, social cognition theorists note that there are many individuals who are perceived and evaluated on the basis of a set of often incorrect beliefs about the individuals’ group (Folkes & Kiesler, 1990). This is a source of “in-group bias,” or a tendency to regard a person’s own group positively and “other groups” negatively. Folkes and Kiesler (1990) suggested that such bias establishes prejudice by nourishing the evaluation of individuals based on generic expectations—or, in other words, by perceiving that all Chinese (Blacks, Hispanics, Jews, etc.) are like that.

Following this line of reasoning about the cinema, it appears that the portrayals of ethnic groups are often the result of stereotypical ethnic images. Stereotypes contain attributes that are assumed to be characteristics of group members in general, and thus stereotypes discourage recognition of differences among members of targeted groups (Stroessner & Mackie, 1993). Often, individuals regard any generalized information they have about a group’s character as an accurate assessment of that group. Thus, the

ethnic caricatures depicted in films appear to be directly related to overgeneralized beliefs or information one might possess that is based on limited experiences. It is for this reason that Linville, Salovey, and Fischer (1986) argued that lack of in-group differentiations is “at the heart of the stereotype concept” (p. 165). Such generalizing can prove detrimental to the welfare of minority groups. Obviously, then, it is important to study the factors that contribute to prejudice and stereotypical portrayals, noting where they exist, how they exist, and how they have changed and evolved over time.

Differences from Previous Studies on this Topic

Previous studies on this topic primarily focused on films from 1910 to 1970 (e.g., Chen, 1998; Lee, 1999; Shi, 2000; Wilson & Gutierrez, 2003; Wong, 1978; Wu, 2000). The present study departed from previous ones by considering more recently produced big Hollywood films as well as older films to analyze the development of the images portrayed and the nature of interracial interactions depicted in those films.

Lee (1999) analyzed the interracial interactions between Chinese males and Caucasians of both genders in Hollywood films from 1919 to 1961, interpreting five films—one film per decade. In the present study, however, the content analysis method was used to identify the types of roles played by Chinese characters in multi-racial films. In addition to the quantitative content analysis of 20 films, qualitative analysis was also used to provide an in-depth explanation of the nature of the relationships depicted between Chinese and Caucasian characters to help form a better picture of the interracial relationships and the power balance portrayed in Hollywood films.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Orientalism

Stereotypes

The word *stereotype* comes from the Greek *stereos*, “solid,” and *typos*, “the mark of a blow,” referring to the metal plates used to print pages (Schneider, 2004). This had the connotations of rigidity and duplication or sameness. Thus, in the early nineteenth century, the term acquired some of its modern meaning when it was used to refer to formalized behavior (Gordon, 1962; Rudmin, 1989). By the beginning of the twentieth century, the word usually referred to rigid, repetitive behavior patterns. The most familiar use of the term today, however, refers to characteristics that we apply to people on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, or nationality (Schroeder, 1970).

Stereotyping is a psychological mechanism that creates categories that allow people to manage the huge amount of data presented to them from the environment. For the most part, we do not first see and then define; we define first and then see. As Lippmann (1922) noted: “In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world, we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture” (p. 81). Lippmann called stereotypes “pictures in our heads” (p. 3). As the old saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words.

There are several reasons why these pictures in our heads seldom correspond to reality. First of all, they are rarely based on personal experience. Instead, they often

serve as a rationalization for maintaining one's own social superiority (Lippmann, 1922). As Wilder (1993) noted, people tend to think of other people in stereotypical ways when they have no other information about them. It is a kind of default position until other information is gathered—if it is. In other words, stereotypes are based on prejudice.

Prejudice

The word *prejudice* comes from the Latin *praejudico*, meaning “to pre-judge.” Aside from stereotyping, other terms that social psychologists use to describe prejudice include *discrimination*, *ethnocentrism*, *ingroup favoritism*, *outgroup derogation*, *social antagonism*, and *social distance* (Augoustinos & Reynolds, 2001). Whatever its name, prejudice refers to negative attitudes or behaviors toward other persons because of their membership in a particular group. Social psychologists (e.g., Allport, 1954; Duckitt, 1992; Miller, 1975) viewed prejudice as irrational, unjust, and rigid—irrational because it is based on cognitive distortions; unjust because it has negative social consequences; and rigid because prejudiced people are unlikely to change their views even in the face of contrary information. One can see the process very clearly, for example, in Nazi Germany, where Jews were caricatured as long-nosed manipulators paradoxically responsible for both capitalism *and* communism (Katz & Braly, 1935).

Locke and Johnston (2001) identified two roles that stereotypes may play in prejudice: “One is an explicit role as a tool used by prejudiced people to help guide their judgments and the other is an implicit role where stereotypes may influence the judgments made by any person” (p. 108). From the view that everyone learns and activates when judging members of stereotyped group, people have moved to a view of stereotypes as tools

employed by prejudiced people. Accordingly, it is essential to understand how people in the West have specifically stereotyped people from the East.

Orientalism

Edward Said (1978) contended that “Orientalism” contains all the prejudicial attitudes that Westerners have against the East. This prejudice relates to political and social life, to literature, and even to academic research. Said made three major claims about Orientalism: (a) although it purported to be an objective, disinterested, and esoteric field, in fact, it functioned to serve political ends; (b) it helped to define a European (mainly English and French) self-image; and (c) it produced a false description of Arab and Islamic culture.

Said’s concept of Orientalism has become a powerful analytical tool in the study of racial, ethnic, and gender representation in the visual media, especially with regard to Asians (Xing, 1998). In effect, Orientalism helped raise discussions on racism, colonialism, and Asian representation in the media to new levels, especially with respect to the questions of power and systems of representation. Said (1978) argued that the Orient was a European invention, “a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences,” and also the place where Europeans invented their “deepest and most recurring images of others” (p. 1). The Orient became a sort of surrogate self for the West, offering itself as the “other” in the conventional East/West dichotomy. Under this East/West, self/other polarity, “Orientals” are what “Occidentals” are not. That is, Orientals and Occidentals are binary categories defined always in reference to one another (Xing, 1998).

Most importantly, Said showed that the relation between Westerners and Orientals is sexual and gendered. The Orient, uniformly associated with sexual promise, sensuality, and unlimited desire, is, in Said's (1978) words, an "exclusively male province" (p. 188).

Women, Said noted:

are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing . . . In the Westerner's view, the Orient always invites penetration and insemination. (pp. 206, 219)

Hollywood films perpetuate examples of Orientalism in their generic formulas, narrative conventions, and cultural assumptions. Although Said drew his primary evidence of Orientalism from academic writing, travel literature, and novels, a body of literature published on Orientalism in film has been growing ever since the 1980s. As Bernstein (1997) observed:

In Orientalism, Said expressed the hope that additional studies of other aspects of the phenomenon would follow his own; and, indeed, cultural critics and theorists have taken up Orientalism as an intriguing and compelling paradigm for the representation of race, ethnicity, and gender in the media, and particularly in film (pp. 4–5).

If before the twentieth century the West invaded the East through colonialism, then Orientalism would maintain that Western imperialism occupied the East in the late twentieth century through culture and ideology. In other words, colonialism today is no longer a territorial invasion, but rather a transfer of cultural products, such as images, symbols, and information to influence changes and transform the Oriental culture. To use Said's sexual metaphor, the West has penetrated the East. Hollywood films have become a powerful vehicle for this penetration and provide excellent texts for examining

stereotypes about Asians. This study focused specifically on Chinese stereotypes created in films made in the United States during the last 10 decades.

The images that mass media project are, in most cases, a reflection of social and political concepts popular within contemporary society. As Lippmann (1941) precisely pointed out, the analyst must recognize “the scene of the action” in this stereotyping process, which means “the concrete, historical reality that serves as the basis for the stereotype” (p. 16). Therefore, before examining racial portrayals in American movies, it is essential to look at the historic precedents and attitudes in which certain stereotypes were cultivated. This will provide insight into whether the stereotypes were prejudiced and the degree to which historic factors have been influenced in their development and use. It is also appropriate to consider the historic experiences in the United States of Chinese groups to determine whether a relationship existed between their experiences with Caucasians and their subsequent treatment in entertainment media.

The Yellow Menace: Chinese Immigration in the United States

Modern communication theory provides a means for understanding the origins of Chinese stereotypes in the United States. Until the late 1700s, no firm notion about the Chinese had taken hold in the American consciousness. Indeed, Americans were largely ignorant of China and its people (Miller, 1969). The less known about something, the easier for opinion makers to influence their audiences about it. Once trade with China triggered an American interest in Asia, the important opinion makers became the traders, missionaries, and diplomats, whose influence on the development of American images of the Chinese was greatly enhanced by their direct experiences in China.

All images are created within the context of a specific setting and timing (Xing, 1998). Some scholars have grouped the changes of images of Asians in American films along historical lines. Harold Isaacs (1958), for example, classified American images of China into six historical periods: (a) the Age of Respect (eighteenth century); (b) the Age of Contempt (1840–1905); (c) the Age of Benevolence (1905–1937); (d) the Age of Administration (1937–1944); (e) the Age of Disenchantment (1944–1949); and (f) the Age of Hostility (post-1949).

During the first period, the Age of Respect, a persistent assumption in American historiography dealing with Sino-American relations is that Americans held Chinese civilization in high esteem during the early years of the China trade, roughly from 1785 to 1840 (Isaacs, 1958).

In the late 1840s, when Chinese began to immigrate in large numbers to the United States, California was desperate for labor, and the Chinese filled the state's labor gap. In many areas, Chinese labor was seen as a godsend by whites. Although Chinese workers were occupationally diverse, they initially concentrated in mining. Wong (1978) wrote that their determination and innovation in mining, often demonstrated by their ability to reap a profit from mines that their white counterparts considered played out, earned the whites' envy and animosity. The success of the Chinese immigrants confounded the contradictory and indefensible assumption that Chinese, as non-whites, were biological inferiors.

A prominent feature of Asians in America is that they were perceived as eternally foreign. As historian Ronald Takaki (1989) has noted:

“Color” in America operated within an economic context. Asian immigrants came here to meet demands for labor—plantation workers, railroad crews, miners, factory operatives, cannery workers, and farm laborers. Employers developed a dual-wage system to pay Asian laborers less than white workers and pitted the groups against each other in order to depress wages for both . . . , [leading] white laborers to demand restriction of Asian workers already here in a segregated labor market of low-wage jobs and the exclusion of future Asian immigrants. Thus the class interests of white capital as well as white labor needed Asians as “strangers” (p. 13).

By 1852, Chinese immigrants were viewed as flooding the nation, their numbers increasing by approximately 20,000 a year (Rohe, 2002). They were rapidly becoming a disproportionate share of the gold miners in California. In 1853, the Foreign Miner’s License Tax, initiated before 1850 in an effort to discourage competition from foreign miners, was paid almost entirely by Chinese miners (Wong, 1978). The white majority was beginning to develop long-lasting antagonisms toward the Chinese.

As the mines became depleted during the mid-1860s, Chinese gradually moved into railroad work. The depression of the 1870s reinforced American labor’s growing hatred of them. A series of racially motivated violent incidents occurred in several western towns, resulting in the deaths of numerous Chinese inhabitants. Finally, in 1882, the first Chinese Exclusion Law closed America’s doors to Chinese. This was followed in 1924 with the passage of the Immigration Act, which banned entry to the United States for all aliens not eligible for citizenship, which included all ethnic Chinese.

The Chinese population in the United States declined from 105,000 in 1880 to 65,000 in 1908 (Wong, 1978). After more than two decades of serving as a welcome source of cheap labor and earning a reputation for industry, honesty, and a peaceful disposition, the

Chinese had become the object of scorn. Chinese laborers were known as “sojourners,” a label that expressed the whites’ desire that the Chinese return “home” when their services here were no longer needed (Feng, 2002). Darrell Hamamoto (1994) has referred to this phenomenon as “the simultaneous necessity and undesirability of Asian immigrant labor” (p. 1). This contradiction was expressed in the views of Chinese-Americans as “model minorities” and simultaneously as the “yellow peril.”

In whites’ perceptions of Asians, nothing is more ingrained in American popular consciousness than the image of the “yellow peril.” A term first applied mainly to the Japanese and Chinese in the United States, it soon collapsed all Asians into one yellow horde and became a catchword signifying the Asian “menace” to Western Christian civilization (Xing, 1998). During the height of the “yellow peril” hysteria, Chinese and Japanese persons were viewed as devious and vicious.

Harold Isaacs (1958) argued that the “yellow peril” concept originally came to America from Europe, where it was rooted in medieval fears of Genghis Khan and his Mongol hordes. Popular literature warned of the dangers of intermarriage with Asians and depicted Asian men purposefully seeking white women. The attitudes engendered by such claims found their way into the entertainment media, as seen in the film *Broken Blossoms*, which will be discussed below.

Beginning in 1924, interest in Chinese and Japanese alien residents in the United States declined remarkably as concern with the rise of China and Japan as foreign powers grew. Also, the Chinese in the United States were shifting from urban laborers to self-employed small businesspeople, and so were not perceived as competing with services

offered by whites.

In the years after World War II, the former enemy, Japan, became a friend of the United States; and the former friend, China, became an enemy. Then, with the rapprochement initiated by President Nixon, U.S.-China relations again took a friendly turn. This series of shifting relationships had an impact on how Chinese have been depicted in Hollywood films.

Portrayals of Chinese in Hollywood Films

As one of the most powerful media in contemporary society, film has contributed to the stereotyping of different cultures and ethnic groups (Xing, 2003). Films serve many functions. They can be art, entertainment, instruments of propaganda, recorders of social change, and transmitters of cultural values (Miller, 1978). This last role has particularly affected ethnic groups in America, since Hollywood films have tended to serve up assimilationist values that reinforce a narrow conception of American life to which all groups are expected to conform. To the extent that groups do not assimilate, they are usually portrayed in films as deviant and suspect.

Chinese Caricatures and Distortions

The history of Chinese in Hollywood films, as seen by many scholars, has been a chronicle of caricature and distorted images. “The yellow peril image has spawned two of Hollywood’s favorite genres: rape narratives and Banzai-type war films” (Xing, 1998, p. 55). Gina Marchetti (1993), in her study of the various strategies employed by Hollywood to influence the American public perception of Asia, found the fantasy of miscegenation in three kinds of narratives: rape stories, captivity tales, and seduction

narratives. Indeed, in Hollywood films, images of race and sexuality are almost always intimately intertwined, with sexual aggression against white women serving as a metaphor for the racial threat posed to Western culture by the “other.” This combination of sexual and racial domination found its way into the entertainment media, as seen in the film *Broken Blossoms*.

Broken Blossoms

After releasing the epic *Birth of a Nation* in 1915, D. W. Griffith released his second film, *Broken Blossoms*, in 1919. Starring Lillian Gish and Richard Barthelmess, *Broken Blossoms* was one of the few sympathetic accounts of an Asian in a mixed-racial love story. From the beginning, the lovers are doomed to a tragic end. The film features Gish as Lucy, the daughter of a brutal prizefighter, and Cheng Huan as a “Yellow Man” from China. The treatment of the Chinese character, a storekeeper, is sympathetic, showing him as dreamy and frail, if lustful (Xing, 1998).

After a vicious beating by her father, Lucy collapses before the “Chink” storekeeper. The sequence of Lucy’s first night at the Chinese man’s home raises the tantalizing possibility of rape. Robert Lang (1989) described the scene in this way:

We see in the shots of an increasing intimacy between the Yellow Man and Lucy, an extreme close-up of the Yellow Man’s face...and Lucy drawing away from the Yellow Man in wonder tinged with fear. (p. 102)

At the time, the idea that a white woman could have sexual relations with a Chinese man was unthinkable.

Marchetti (1993) wrote that the subplot of this film is “the fantasy of rape and the possibility of lynching to reaffirm the boundaries of a white-defined, patriarchal, Anglo-

American culture” (p. 10). *Broken Blossoms* is essentially a contradictory mix of high-minded moralizing and lasciviousness, of racial stereotypes and pleas for tolerance, of aestheticism and exploitative violence (Marchetti, 1993).

Other Interracial Platonic Romances in Hollywood Films

In addition to the celebrated “platonic romance” featured in *Broken Blossoms*, many other silent films dealt sympathetically with tragic interracial love affairs. For example, *Red Lantern*, also produced in 1919, featured the love of an illegitimate Eurasian woman (Alla Nazimova) for an American missionary. When he does not return her affection, she becomes bitter toward hypocritical Westerners who educate Chinese but still harbor racist sentiments against them. She joins the Boxer Rebellion, the 1900 uprising against foreigners in China, first supported and later condemned by the Imperial court, and meets with a tragic end.

Similarly, in *City of Dim Faces* (1918), Jang Lung (played by the Japanese Sessue Hayakawa in one of his many Chinese roles) falls in love with a white woman, is shunned, becomes bitter, and finally repents before his tragic demise.

The various versions of *Madame Butterfly*, including Mary Pickford’s in 1915, Sessue Hayakawa’s *His Birthright* (1918), a “sequel” to *Madame Butterfly*, and Anna May Wong’s *Toll of the Sea* (1922), also confer certain sympathies on those involved in interracial romances.

Anna May Wong

Brownlow (1990) interviewed Anna May Wong about the roles she and other Asian-American actors and actresses received in the 1960s. At one point, Wong said:

How should we be, with a civilization that's so many times older than that of the West? We have our own virtues. We have our rigid code of behavior, of honor. Why do they never show these on the screen? Why should we always scheme, rob, kill? I get so weary of it all—the scenarist's concept of Chinese characters (p. 333).

Wong was among the earliest to protest Hollywood's portrayals of Chinese.

Frustrated by her experiences with racism at the peak of her career, she left the country temporarily to protest the negative roles she was routinely offered (Xing, 1998).

Chinese Warlords and White Rape Victims

In the 1930s, Asian men were routinely portrayed in American films as gangsters or rapists with perverted sexual appetites for white women (Xing, 1998). Often, the white women victims would eventually be rescued by a white male hero, and the Asian rapist would be lynched by white male vigilantes.

Images of the Chinese in Hollywood productions were never static, however. American films demonstrated America's lack of awareness of China's civil war until the late 1920s, although China had been embroiled in civil war since the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 (Oehling, 1980). When Americans finally did take notice, their attitudes toward the Chinese began to change rapidly. In the 1930s, China and the Chinese suddenly became objects of great interest. The Chinese civil war provided both the setting and the catalyst for dramatic crises in several important and successful films, including *Shanghai Express* (1932) and *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933).

As Marchetti (1993) stated, most of the Hollywood tales featuring an Asian captor appear to fall into one of two categories. One narrative formula involves the threat of "white slavery," with the captive forced into prostitution. This plot has been common in

Hollywood since the silent era and still pops up in dramas like *The Girls of the White Orchid* (1983). A second narrative type deals with a captive—usually a missionary or nurse—threatened by sexual contact with a bandit leader, warlord, or other military figure. The latter type of narrative was particularly popular during the 1930s, when films featured Chinese warlords ravaging China, as in *Shanghai Express* (1932) and *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933).

In *Shanghai Express*, director Josef von Sternberg told the tale of a glamorous Caucasian prostitute, Shanghai Lily (Marlene Dietrich) on a train en route from Peking to Shanghai during the Chinese civil war. When she meets her former lover, Captain Donald Harvey (Clive Brook), a physician in the British Medical Corps, after having been deserted by him five years earlier, he is unaware of her reputation as “the White Flower of the Chinese Coast.” One of the other passengers on the train, a Eurasian merchant named Henry Chang (Warner Oland, of *Charlie Chan* fame), is actually a warlord rebel leader in disguise. Angry because some of his men were arrested when the train left the station, he has his rebels ambush the train. His plan is to take hostages, including Captain Harvey, to arrange a prisoner exchange. He also threatens to blind Captain Harvey unless Shanghai Lily will become his mistress. Without the captain being aware of her sacrifice, Lily reluctantly agrees. However, before the warlord can have his way with Lily, a Chinese-American prostitute on the train, Hui Fei (Anna May Wong), who has earlier been raped by the warlord, takes her revenge by stabbing him to death, thereby freeing all the captives on the train, and sparing Lily the disgrace of being violated by an Asian (even if he is only half Asian).

In *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*, China is portrayed as a strange, exotic land of contrasts, with General Yen (Nils Asther), a rising warlord, exemplifying these contrasts. He brutally orders a great number of captives to be executed, and then justifies his order to his attractive American visitor, Megan Davis (Barbara Stanwyck), as being better than letting them starve to death in prison. Of course, Yen and Davis fall in love, but that love is both platonic and fated to a tragic end. Yen commits suicide, a practice Hollywood had long since routinely assigned to Asians.

Chinese Peasants and The Good Earth

Only the peasants finally emerged from the 1930s with a positive stereotype, principally in the film version of Pearl Buck's (1931) best-selling novel *The Good Earth*. The film made from the book, released in 1937, set out to make the Chinese farmers real and likable, and succeeded so well that it provided the pattern for the treatment of Chinese peasants in the war films that flooded the screen in the early 1940s (Oehling, 1980). The central figures, Wang (Paul Muni) and O-Lan (Louise Rainer), are wholesome, simple people, warm and friendly, in love with one another, and good parents to their children. They work hard, and they succeed in building up a family fortune, despite several near-fatal calamities. Clearly, these Chinese peasants were fundamentally trustworthy and dependable and the kind of people on which a good democracy might be built.

The question is, why were peasants favored in the film over middle-class Chinese, whose lifestyle bore far more resemblance to the American model? The simplest answer is that the film capitalized on a successful novel. Yet, that might not be the

complete explanation. China lacked a large and influential middle class at that time, and life in Chinese cities was commonly known to be a mixture of widely disparate opposites of decadent wealth and abject poverty. Therefore, the image of the new Chinese peasant who had good sense and was industrious and patient was a positive stereotype that triumphed over guile and evil in this American film.

The Clever Charlie Chan

One of the more popular and persistent images of the Chinese-American in the 1930s was that of Charlie Chan. He was, however, never portrayed by a Chinese or other Asian actor during the entire series, which spanned six decades through the 1981 release of a Peter Ustinov version (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995). The figure of Charlie Chan was established firmly in the minds of several generations of Americans, and the plots changed as little as Charlie Chan did himself.

Charlie Chan films were filled with stereotypical affections—for example, the patronizing way in which Charlie spoke to his buffoonish sons. Charlie was always the slow-moving, methodical, intelligent detective, who, in contrast to everyone else's rash conclusions, always unraveled the mystery by careful examination of details.

Although Charlie was the most cerebral of the characters in his film escapades, he possessed, in addition to his intelligence, "Oriental" traits that enabled American audiences to identify him with his race. He was always mysterious in his crime-solving techniques, never revealing his logic until the end of the film. Furthermore, his slow gait, drowsy manner, and halting speech suggested that he might have spent some time with an opium pipe.

There is always a romance in Charlie Chan films, but it never involves Charlie. The image of the main character is in many ways popular and positive, but perhaps so limited to Charlie himself that it had little or no carryover to Chinese-Americans generally. Nevertheless, the prototype of the middle-class Chinese-American, Charlie Chan, led the way to the intensely pro-Chinese images of World War II (Wilson, Gutiérrez, & Chao, 2003).

The Diabolical Dr. Fu Manchu

Contrary to the detective images of Charlie Chan, one of the more vicious incarnations of the so-called Asian personality is the mysterious, fictitious character of Dr. Fu Manchu, created by Sax Rohmer (1913) with the publication of the novel *The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu*, which was then serialized by *Collier's Magazine* (Choy, 1978). Fu Manchu soon became a diabolical film villain who provided Hollywood with an entrée into new stereotypes based on Chinese warlords (Wilson, Gutiérrez, & Chao, 2003).

After World War II, many television shows were also built around the notorious Fu Manchu, and, like Charlie Chan, the Fu Manchu series spanned six decades, from 1929 to 1980. Moreover, both film series were cast according to the assumption that Chinese men could not play leading roles in films even if the main character were Chinese. These films were photographed in such a way as to cast Fu in deep shadows, thereby communicating evil and mysterious impressions to the audience. The theme of these films was Fu's attempts to use one of his new inventions to dominate or destroy the world, only to be ultimately defeated by a white person.

Sax Rohmer, who created perhaps the most evil Chinese character of all time,

confessed his ignorance of the Chinese people. “I made my name on Fu Manchu,” he wrote, “because I know nothing about the Chinese . . . I know something about Chinatown. But that is a different matter” (Ash & Rohmer, 1972, p. 72). Rohmer’s perception of Chinatown was that of a faceless, exotic, and mysterious evil (Wong, 1978).

All in all, the diabolical Fu Manchu symbolized for the American audience three main strands of racial fears: (a) Asian mastery of Western knowledge and technique, as indicated by Fu’s degrees from three European universities in chemistry, medicine, and physics; (b) mysterious Oriental “occult” powers, as suggested by Fu’s eyes, which could hypnotize his victims; and (c) the mobilization of the yellow hordes, which was in Fu’s power to achieve (Xing, 1998).

Sometimes, Fu was paired with an evil dragon lady. Sexy, sly, and cruel, she had a notorious appetite for white men. The dragon lady could hypnotize her male rivals, gain their trust by seducing them, and when they least expected it, get rid of them. The term “dragon lady” refers to an Asian woman who is seductive and desirable but untrustworthy. A good example is found in *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931), adapted from Sax Rohmer’s novel *The Daughter of Fu Manchu* (1928). An exotic dancer, Ling Moy (Anna May Wong), unwittingly lives next door to Dr. Fu Manchu (Warner Oland) until she discovers that she is his daughter. After that, amazingly enough, she immediately swears to carry on the family vendetta. This is totally unlike Fu’s white daughter, Lia, in *The Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* (1929), who had had to be hypnotized to do Fu’s evil bidding.

War Narratives

Three wars were fought in Asia in the 1940s—World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War—and all left an important legacy for the stereotyping of Asians. As William Everson (1964) observed, “Pearl Harbor enabled Hollywood to revive all the old ‘yellow peril’ characteristics” (p. 130). Hollywood developed a genre around World War II, typified by such films as *Guadalcanal Diary* (1943), *The Purple Heart* (1944), and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957).

Within the war narrative, a subgenre of tong wars or crime melodramas used the same “yellow peril” theme (Xing, 1988). Chinatowns, depicted as inaccessible, dirty, violence-ridden urban ghettos, have long been the stock setting for gangster films, from *The Hatchet Man* (1932), *The Mysterious Mr. Wong* (1934), and *China Girl* (1942) to *Chinatown* (1974), *Year of the Dragon* (1985) and *Big Trouble in Little China* (1986).

In the 1950s, while the Korean War, the Cold War, McCarthyism, and Anti-Communism were prevalent, the Soviet Union and China were synonymous with Communism. “China, whose people had been viewed so warmly by America only a decade earlier, was once again seen as home of the yellow peril” (Wilson, Gutiérrez, & Chao, 2003, p. 94).

Since 1950, films on the subject of China and the Chinese have tended to fall into three groups: (a) those that deal with historical China, particularly the China of the late Empire and early republic; (b) those about the Communist takeover of China and the actual Communist government and society born of the revolution; and (c) those in which Communist China appears as a mysterious and vicious force in the near or distant future

and that have almost nothing to do with actual events or personalities in Communist China (Oehling, 1980).

In the first group are two popular films that are set in early twentieth-century China, *55 Days at Peking* (1962) and *The Sand Pebbles* (1962). In both films, Chinese are depicted as deceitful, cruel, addicted to drugs, engaging openly and constantly in slave practices and prostitution, and harboring an intense and violent hatred of all Westerners.

A film representative of the second group is *Satan Never Sleeps* (1962), which was based on a novel of the same name by Pearl Buck (1962). The story portrayed the seemingly endless hordes of Chinese Communist soldiers pouring across the Yalu River into North Korea.

The films in the third group are the most interesting. They have presented the Chinese as a mysterious society with aspirations for world domination or world destruction, either on the political or the criminal level. This can be seen in such films as *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), *Battle Beneath* (1966), and *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (1969), and further back to the Fu Manchu films. Although the gains for Communist China are often very nebulous, the plots of these films delineate the evil of their Chinese characters (Oehling, 1980).

Positive Developments in the 1960s

Two Hollywood films in the 1960s explored positive American visions of Chinese culture. *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960) portrays a white American businessman, Robert (William Holden), who is bored with office life and moves to Hong Kong to pursue a new career as a painter. Once he is established there, he meets and falls in love

with a beautiful Chinese girl, Suzie Wong (Nancy Kwan), whose cultural circumstances have led her into a life of prostitution. At first, Robert resists her charms, but then she becomes his model, and their relationship grows complex. The main problem for him is that, once he discovers her profession, he cannot stand the idea of sharing her with other men. The breakthrough is that a white man and an Asian woman do consummate a sexual relationship.

Nancy Kwan also starred in *Flower Drum Song* (1961), a musical comedy about the problems of Chinese immigrant assimilation in the United States. Intended as a positive and sympathetic portrayal of Asians, the film presents a “model minority” image that is fundamentally a new variation of the old Charlie Chan genre. *Flower Drum Song*, the first and possibly only all-Asian-cast Broadway musical, portrayed the Chinese community as humble, quiet, and successful. As Renee Tajima (1993) commented, *Flower Drum Song* “gave birth to a whole new generation of stereotypes—gum chewing Little Leaguers, enterprising businessmen, and all-American tomboys of the new model minority myth” (p. 27). The model minority image represents, as Marchetti (1991) points out, “a new bent on racist representations of Asian Americans” (p. 216), which can be traced back to the Charlie Chan prototype.

From the 1970s to Today

From the mid-1970s, following the reopening of diplomatic and trade ties with China, the pendulum swung again in China’s favor. A surge of American interest in Asian martial arts, however, spurred the creation of films featuring almost nonstop violent action in scenes showing villains and heroes employing kung fu, karate, and other

combative techniques. Chinese-American actor Bruce Lee, an acrobatic master of the martial arts, became the catalyst for the motion picture genre that portrays the Chinese as sadistically violent. Lee's films depicted Chinese characters in both heroic and villainous roles.

In terms of popularity with American audiences, Jackie Chan succeeded Lee as the martial arts master. Chan decided that rather than imitating Lee, and thereby remaining in his shadow, he would develop his own style of filmmaking, a form of martial arts drama that he calls "happy-go-lucky" (Xing, 1998). His film directing debut, *The Young Master* (1980), which he made in Hong Kong, was one of the first martial arts films to combine comedy with action. This set the tone for many of Chan's future films, made in the United States, which combined slapstick humor with high-energy martial arts action. A fan of Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd, Chan performs all his own stunts, often at his own peril. His later films include outtakes of his on-set injuries run behind the closing credits.

Perhaps the most insightful American film portrayal of Asians in the last 40 years was the screen adaptation of Amy Tan's (1989) novel *The Joy Luck Club*. The film, which was released in 1993, explored Chinese and Chinese-American culture and interpersonal conflicts through the eyes of three generations of Chinese women. Via a series of flashbacks, four young Chinese women, all of whom were born in America, and their respective mothers, all of whom were born in feudal China, explore their past. This search helps them to understand their difficult mother/daughter relationships.

Since the early 1990s, the American screen has been virtually "invaded" by an "Asian

wave.” Films from the three Chinas—mainland dramas, Taiwanese domestic comedies, and Hong Kong action films—have been marching into Hollywood together. According to Robert Sklar (1997), “special-effects disaster films rule Hollywood, and Brawny-hero action films come next in importance” (p. B7). Not only has this new Asian wave brought some refreshing newfound aesthetics to Hollywood, but it has also created new opportunities and challenges for the indigenous Chinese American cinema sandwiched in between.

Conclusions

Choy (1978) identified Asian Americans as having been portrayed within the mass media into four main stereotypes: the “stock” image, the “mysterious villain,” “the China Doll” or “Geisha,” and the “Banzai war crime” image (p. 149). Later, Chen (1998) identified seven themes about Chinese characters in early American films: (a) yellow peril; (b) The mystery of China; (c) The love between Chinese men and white women, but with sexual relations never more than implicit.; (d) the exotic Chinese woman; (e) Chinatown as a place of absolute evil; (f) The Boxer Rebellion or Fists of Righteous Harmony, which resulted in the sacking of Beijing by a force composed of American, European, and Japanese army units.; and (g) the hardworking Chinese people. The new wave that emerged in the 1960s has continued to develop. As Wilson, Gutiérrez, and Chao (2003) have noted, in the new millennium the concepts of racial diversity and multiculturalism have become part of the fabric of American discourse. Consequently, it is time to reexamine the old Chinese stereotypes to see how they have changed over the decades.

Research Questions

The researcher has explored the depiction of Chinese characters in 20 major Hollywood films from 1919 to the present to answer the overall research question:

How were Chinese portrayed in major Hollywood films and how have their portrayals changed during the period from 1910-2005. Specific research questions are as follows:

1. *Who plays Chinese characters?*
2. *Are the Chinese characters sympathetic?*
3. *What stereotypes of Chinese characters are depicted?*
4. *What stereotypes of Chinese behaviors are depicted?*
5. *What are the principal themes in the films?*
6. *How is Chinatown depicted?*
7. *How is China depicted?*
8. *What jobs do Chinese and Caucasian characters have?*
9. *What is the social status of the Chinese and Caucasian characters?*
10. *Does the story reflect average Americans' attitude toward Chinese?*
11. *What is the box appeal of the film?*
12. *How are sexual relations or attractions treated between Chinese and Caucasian characters?*
13. *Are Chinese men depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Caucasian women?*
14. *Are Chinese men depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Chinese women?*
15. *Are Chinese women treated differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Caucasian men?*

16. *Are Chinese women treated differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Chinese men?*
17. *Aside from sexual or romantic relationships, are Chinese characters treated differently from Caucasian characters?*
18. *What words do Caucasian characters use to refer to Chinese characters?*
19. *Does the film end happily or sadly for the principal Chinese character(s)?*
20. *How would average Americans view Chinese after seeing this film?*

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Selection of the Research Approach

Film historian Carlos Cortés (1992) identified three categories of ethnic film analysis: *content analysis*, which explores films as visual texts; *control analysis*, which explores the process of filmmaking; and *impact analysis*, which explores the influence of films on audiences and vice versa. The examination in the present study of stereotypical images of Chinese characters in Hollywood films is clearly content analysis.

In content analysis, symbols of communication are given numeric values. Statistics are used to describe the communication and make inferences about its meaning and context (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998). In this study, the symbols of communication are actors and characters in film stories. Content analysis can be used to describe the attributes of messages, and those attributes can be compared over time to identify trends or sources to detect differences and similarities (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000). In addition to the quantitative content analysis of 20 films, qualitative analysis was also used to provide an in-depth explanation of the nature of the relationships depicted between Chinese and Caucasian characters to help form a better picture of the interracial relationships and the power balance portrayed in Hollywood films.

In this study, the messages have to do with how Chinese men and women are depicted in Hollywood films, and the attributes include such factors as whether the characters are played by ethnic Chinese actors and whether the characters are portrayed sympathetically or unsympathetically.

Content analysis has been used to one degree or another to explore the media images of various minority groups (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991)—for example, Noble's (1948) study of African Americans in films; Choy's (1978) study of Asian Americans in films and on television; Faber, O'Guinn, and Meyer's (1987) study of Hispanics on television; Cortés's (1992) study of Chicanos in films; Marchetti's (1993) study of Asian Americans in films; and Tajima's (1993) study of Asian women in films. By analyzing obvious factors, such as the social, professional, or economic status of Chinese characters in Hollywood films, researchers produced objective results. That is the intent of this study in its analysis of how Chinese characters are portrayed in major American films from the 1910s to the 2000s.

Selection of Films

The researcher examined two films for each decade from 1910 through the present, bringing the total number of films examined to 20. The criteria for selecting a film for examination were that they be major Hollywood films in which the actors in supporting or leading roles depicted Chinese characters, although these were not always played by Chinese actors. To compile the list of major Hollywood films that depicted Chinese characters between 1910 and 2005, the researcher consulted the American Film Institute Catalog of Feature Films (www.afi.com), the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com), *New York Times* film reviews (movies.nytimes.com/ref/movies/reviews), Amazon.com, and numerous articles and books on Asians in American films (e.g., Choy, 1978; Feng, 2002; Lee, 1999; Marchetti, 1993; Oehling, 1980; Shi, 2000; Tajima, 1993; Wong, 1978; Wu, 2000; Xing, 1998, 2003).

In addition to the criteria stated above, for most decades, the selected films (a) were successful at the box office and (b) won or were nominated for critical awards. However, for three of the films—*The Tong Man* (1919), *Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* (1929), and *Charlie Chan in the Secret Service* (1944)—only the successful box office criterion was met. *The Tong Man* was selected because, with the exception of *Broken Blossoms* (1919), it was the only film produced in the decade between 1910 and 1919 that this researcher could obtain. Neither the Fu Manchu nor the Charlie Chan movies received critical acclaim. However, both series spanned six decades of Hollywood film-making—the Fu Manchu series from 1929 to 1980, and the Charlie Chan series from 1926 to 1981. Also, *Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* and *Charlie Chan in the Secret Service* were selected to represent this important Chinese character mystery genre.

Asians and Asian themes, mostly about Chinese people and Chinese culture, found their way into American films as early as the latter part of the nineteenth century, but most of those films were documentaries or semi-documentaries (Wong, 1978). The first major American dramatic film to feature Chinese characters was D. W. Griffith's *Broken Blossoms* (1919). This was also one of the first full-length motion pictures in which a white man in makeup portrayed a Chinese (Wong, 1978). Therefore, it was a good starting point for examining Chinese images in Hollywood films.

The films that were analyzed were:

Broken Blossoms (1919)
The Tong Man (1919)
The Thief of Bagdad (1924)
Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu (1929)
Shanghai Express (1932)

The Good Earth (1937)
Charlie Chan in the Secret Service (1944)
Dragon Seed (1944)
Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing (1955)
The Inn of the Sixth Happiness (1958)
The World of Suzie Wong (1960)
Flower Drum Song (1961)
Kung Fu (1972)
Enter the Dragon (1973)
Year of the Dragon (1985)
The Last Emperor (1987)
The Joy Luck Club (1993)
Tomorrow Never Dies (1997)
The One (2001)
Shanghai Knight (2003)

Coding Categories

Using a Coding Sheet (see Appendix A), the researcher coded the 20 films for attributes about the Chinese characters portrayed in the films, following the 20 research questions. These attributes include:

1. Whether Chinese characters are portrayed by Chinese actors.
2. How sympathetic or unsympathetic the Chinese characters are.
3. How stereotypical the leading and supporting Chinese characters are.
4. What stereotypical Chinese behaviors, if any, are depicted.
5. The principal themes in the film.
6. Whether Chinatown appears in the film; and if so, how it is depicted.
7. Whether China appears in the film; and if so, how it is depicted.
8. The job positions of the Chinese and Caucasian characters in the film.
9. The social status of the Chinese and Caucasian characters in the film.
10. Whether the story depicts Americans' attitudes toward Chinese.

11. What makes the film appealing.
12. Whether there is sexual attraction or a sexual relationship, implicit or explicit, between Chinese and Caucasian characters—and if so, whether that relationship is depicted as positive or negative.
13. Whether Chinese men are depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Caucasian women.
14. Whether Chinese men are depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Chinese women.
15. Whether Chinese women are depicted differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Caucasian men.
16. Whether Chinese women are depicted differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Chinese men.
17. Aside from sexual or romantic relationships, whether or not Chinese characters are treated differently from Caucasian characters.
18. What words, if any, Caucasian characters use to refer to Chinese characters.
19. Whether the film ends happily or sadly for the principal Chinese character(s).
20. How viewers would be expected to view Chinese after seeing this film—positively, negatively, or mixed.

Definition of Coding Categories

There are several quantifiable aspects about Chinese characters portrayed in the films, such as how sympathetic or unsympathetic they are, their employment status, whether they are played by Chinese actors, their romantic and sexual relationships with Caucasian characters, and whether the films end happily or sadly for them. The definitions for the specific categories follow.

Leading Roles: The most important characters in a film, usually played by stars.

Major Supporting Roles: Characters who are pivotal or vital to the story but less important than the leads. They are sometimes but not necessarily played by character actors rather than stars.

Minor Supporting Roles: Characters who speak at least one line of dialogue and are listed in the credits. (In television, minor supporting roles are referred to as “under sixes,” because they speak fewer than six lines.)

Extras: Characters who normally appear in the background—for example, in a street scene—and speak no lines. They usually require little or no acting experience, are hired *en masse* with little formality, and are usually paid at low rates. War films and epic films often employ extras in large numbers, possibly into the thousands.

Very Sympathetic Characters: Characters who are viewed very favorably in terms of their likeability, affability, and empathy.

Sympathetic Characters: Characters who are viewed favorably in terms of their likeability, affability, and empathy.

Neither Sympathetic nor Unsympathetic Characters: Characters who are viewed neither favorably nor unfavorably in terms of their likeability, affability, and empathy.

Unsympathetic Characters: Characters who are viewed unfavorably in terms of their likeability, affability, and empathy.

Very Unsympathetic Characters: Characters who are viewed very unfavorably in terms of their likeability, affability, and empathy.

Intercoder Reliability

At the beginning of the study, as a pretest, the researcher trained a second coder, who is American, to view two films that were not part of this study but contained important Chinese characters. After viewing two films, the two coders discussed disagreements on results, and certain definitions of the coding categories were revised clearly. To ensure high intercoder reliability, the second coder coded 25%, (5 of 20) on the sample films. The intercoder reliability sample was taken by randomly selecting one film from each two decades— *The Thief of Bagdad*, *Dragon Seed*, *The World of Suzie Wong*, *The Last Emperor* and *Tomorrow Never Dies*. The data from the second coding set for the 20 research questions were compared one by one and a percentage of agreement between coders was calculated using Scott's pi equation (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000, p. 204).

Scott's pi formula is stated below:

$$C.R. = \frac{\pi = \% \text{ observed agreement} - \% \text{ expected agreement}}{1 - \% \text{ expected agreement}}$$

The reliability for each question ranged from 80% to 100% and the results for the overall equations was 93%. The reliability for each question is as follows:

1. 86%
2. 81%
3. 81%
4. 100%
5. 83%
6. 85%
7. 80%
8. 97%
9. 88%
10. 100%

11. 89%
12. 84%
13. 100%
14. 100%
15. 100%
16. 100%
17. 100%
18. 100%
19. 100%
20. 100%

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to show how responses were distributed and ordered. To understand and interpret the data, the researcher used frequency distributions to display the percentage of responses for each value and rank order it, so the high, middle, and low percentages can be easily identified. Cross-tabulation was also used to examine the relationship between two or more variables by breaking down the variables into subgroups or subcategories. By using descriptive statistics to analyze the data for each film and then for each decade, the researcher looked for patterns and trends over time.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Overview

This chapter provides data from the content analysis on the portrayal of Chinese characters in Hollywood films between 1919 and 2003. The data are presented question by question in the following order:

1. Who plays the Chinese characters?
2. Are the Chinese characters sympathetic?
3. What stereotypes of Chinese characters are depicted?
4. What stereotypes of Chinese behaviors are depicted?
5. What are the principal themes in the films?
6. How is Chinatown depicted?
7. How is China depicted?
8. What jobs do Chinese and Caucasian characters have?
9. What is the social status of the Chinese and Caucasian characters?
10. Does the story reflect average Americans' attitudes toward Chinese at the time the film was released?
11. What was the box appeal of the film?
12. How are sexual relations or attractions treated between Chinese and Caucasian characters?
13. Are Chinese men depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Caucasian women?
14. Are Chinese men depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Chinese women?

15. Are Chinese women treated differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Caucasian men?
16. Are Chinese women treated differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Chinese men?
17. Aside from sexual or romantic relationships, are Chinese characters treated differently from Caucasian characters?
18. What words do Caucasian characters use to refer to Chinese characters?
19. Does the film end happily or sadly for the principal Chinese character(s)?
20. How would average Americans view Chinese after seeing this film?

As a whole, the 20 research questions provide an explanation of the two overall research questions: *How were Chinese portrayed in major Hollywood films and how have their portrayals changed during the period from 1910—2005.*

Chinese Characters in Hollywood Films

To answer Research Question 1 regarding who portrayed Chinese characters, the researcher examined the ethnicity as well as the genders of the leading, supporting, and minor characters.

Male Leading Roles

Of the 19 male leading roles in the 20 films, only seven (37%) were played by Chinese actors. Between 1919 and 1972, 4 of the 12 (33%) were played by Japanese actors, 7 of the 12 (58%) were played by Caucasian actors, and one of the 12 (8%) characters was played by a Turkish actor (Turhan Bey, in *Dragon Seed* [1944]). The first Chinese character to be played by a Chinese actor did not appear until 1973, when

Bruce Lee starred in *Enter the Dragon*. After 1973, all six Chinese male leading characters were played by Chinese actors.

Female Leading Roles

There were 20 Chinese leading female roles in the 20 films, but 8 (40%) of these were in *The Joy Luck Club* (1993). Of these 20 roles, 10 (50%) were played by Chinese actresses, 5 of whom are in *The Joy Luck Club*. The first Chinese actress to play a Chinese leading female character was Nancy Kwan, in *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960). Nancy Kwan also starred as the lead female in *Flower Drum Song* (1961). From 1961 to 1993, 3 (15%) of these roles were played by Japanese actresses (2 of those in *Flower Drum Song*), and 2 (10%) were played by Vietnamese actresses. From 1919 to 1955, all 5 (25%) of the female leading roles were played by Caucasian actresses.

Male Major Supporting Roles

There were 23 major supporting male roles in the 20 films, of which 13 (57%) were played by Chinese actors, 9 (39%) were played by Caucasian actors, and 1 (4%) was played by a Japanese actor (Toyo Fujita in *The Tong Man* [1919]). The first Chinese actor to play a supporting male Chinese role was Benson Fong as the son of Charlie Chan, in *Charlie Chan in the Secret Service* (1944). From 1919 to 1958, 9 of the 12 roles (75%) were played by Caucasian actors, 1 (8%) by a Japanese actor (Fujita), and only 2 (17%) by Chinese actors. However, from 1961 to 2003, all 11 (100%) of the supporting male roles were played by Chinese actors.

Female Major Supporting Roles

There were 14 major supporting female roles in the 20 films, of which 11 (79%)

were played by Chinese actresses, 1 (7 %) by a Caucasian actress, 1 (7%) by a Japanese actress (Reiko Sato in *Flower Drum Song* [1961]), and 1 (7%) by an African American actress (Juanita Hall, in *Flower Drum Song*). After 1973, all 4 of these supporting female roles were played by Chinese actresses.

Male Minor Supporting Roles

There were 38 male minor supporting roles in the 20 films, of which 35 (92%) were played by Chinese actors, 2 (5%) by Caucasian actors, and 1 (3%) by an African American actor (Noble Johnson as Fu Manchu's assistant in *Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* [1929]). From 1955 on, all 28 of these male minor supporting roles were played by Chinese actors.

Female Minor Supporting Roles

There were 21 female minor supporting roles in the 20 films, of which 13 (62%) were played by Chinese actresses, and 8 (38%) by Caucasian actresses. The first Chinese actress to play a minor supporting role appeared in *The Good Earth* (1937). From 1958 on, all 8 of these female minor supporting roles were played by Chinese actresses.

Presentation of Characters: Sympathetic or Unsympathetic

Research Question 2 was aimed at determining whether the portrayals of Chinese characters were sympathetic. The most frequently occurring sympathetic level for all categories of male Chinese characters was sympathetic: 8 of the 19 leading roles (42%); 11 of the 23 supporting roles (48%); and 16 of the 38 minor roles (42%).

The most frequently occurring sympathetic level for female Chinese characters

varied by category. Ten of the 20 leading roles (50%) were very sympathetic.

However, 10 of the 14 supporting roles (71%) and 9 of the 21 minor roles (43%) were sympathetic (Table 1).

Table 1

Percentages of Sympathetic Level of Male and Female Chinese Characters

Sympathetic Level	Male			Female		
	Leading Roles (n = 19)	Supporting Roles (n = 23)	Minor Roles (n = 38)	Leading Roles (n = 20)	Supporting Roles (n = 14)	Minor Roles (n = 21)
Very Sympathetic	.26	.17	.18	.50	.07	.19
Sympathetic	.42	.48	.42	.45	.71	.43
Neither Sympathetic nor Unsympathet ic	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.05
Unsympathet ic	.05	.04	.26	.05	.00	.19
Very Unsympathet ic	.26	.30	.13	.00	.24	.14

The first “very sympathetic” male leading role appeared in *Charlie Chan in the*

Secret Service (1944), with the detective played by Sidney Toler. The first “very sympathetic” female leading role was Louise Rainer in *the Good Earth* (1937). The study showed that the majority of Chinese characters were depicted as having some shortcomings — even those who were coded as “sympathetic.” For example, the male leading role in *Broken Blossoms* (1919), played by Richard Barthelmess, was very tender and kind-hearted, but also very sentimental and feminine in appearance. Consequently, the researcher evaluated this role as “sympathetic.”

Chinese Characters and Stereotypes

Chinese Male Stereotypes in the Films

Research Question 3 asked what stereotypes of Chinese characters were depicted. To answer this, the researcher selected leading and major supporting Chinese characters, male and female, for each film. Tables 2 show that the most frequently occurring leading male stereotypes were family loyalty (50%), cautious (45%), courteous (45%), and inscrutable (45%). The most frequently occurring leading female stereotypes were tender (50%) and submissiveness (50%).

Table 2

Top 14 Stereotypes of Leading Chinese Characters in 20 Films

Stereotypes	Male		Stereotypes	Female	
	n	%		n	%
Family loyalty	10	50	Tender	10	50
Cautious	9	45	Submissive	10	50
Inscrutable	9	45	Virtuous	9	45
Courteous	9	45	Family loyalty	8	40
Mysterious	8	40	Restrained	7	35
Meditative	8	40	Naive	7	35
Righteous	8	40	Exotic	7	35
Humorless	7	35	Sexy	7	35
Reserved	7	35	Tolerant	7	35
Sly	7	35	Tradition-Loving	6	30
Tender	7	35	Courteous	6	30
Ambitious	7	35	Clever	6	30
Tradition-Loving	6	30	Righteous	6	30
Diabolical	6	30	Seductive	6	30

Four of these 14 stereotypes are negative (diabolical, humorless, inscrutable, and sly); six are positive (courteous, family loyalty, meditative, righteous, tender, and tradition-loving); and four could be negative or positive, depending upon the circumstance (ambitious, cautious, mysterious, and reserved). In general, Chinese male leading characters were depicted in more positive than negative ways. For example, Captain Lin Nan (Curt Jurgens) in *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* provided positive

stereotypical images such as meditateness and righteousness. Moreover, when he met Gladys (Ingrid Bergman), the woman he loved, he became very tender in taking care of her.

Similar to male leading role stereotypes, female leading role stereotypes are all more or less positive, at least—as with submissive—in their historical context. The most positive female stereotype was O-Lan, played by Louise Rainer, in *The Good Earth* (1937), who represented the traditional Chinese woman. She put all her heart and soul into her family, helped with the farming, took care of her children and father-in-law, and supported her husband even when he betrayed her with another woman.

Table 3 shows that the most frequently occurring stereotypes of male supporting roles were humorless (35%), sly (30%), and inscrutable (30%). The most frequently occurring stereotypes of female supporting role were sexy (30%) and quiet (30%).

Table 3

Top 10 Stereotypes of Major Supporting Chinese Characters in 20 Films

Stereotypes	Male		Stereotypes	Female	
	n	%		n	%
Humorless	7	35	Sexy	6	30
Sly	6	30	Quiet	6	30
Inscrutable	6	30	Exotic	5	25
Cautious	5	25	Virtuous	5	25
Tradition-Loving	5	25	Courteous	4	20
Deceitful	5	25	Family Loyalty	4	20
Quiet	5	25	Sly	4	20
Plain	5	25	Seductive	4	20
Family Loyalty	5	25	Tender	4	20
Meditative	5	25	Diabolical	3	15

Three of these top 10 male stereotypes are negative (inscrutable, sly, and deceitful), three are positive (family loyalty, meditative, and tradition-loving), and four are neutral (cautious, quiet, humorless, and plain). This suggests that Chinese male supporting characters were depicted in conflicting ways, both positively and negatively. Similar to male supporting role, female supporting role are also depicted in conflicting ways, both positively and negatively

Depiction of Stereotypical Chinese Behaviors

Research Question 4 asked what stereotypical Chinese behaviors, if any, were depicted. Table 4 shows that the most frequently occurring stereotypical Chinese

behaviors were smoking tobacco incessantly (45%), smoking opium (35%), and hawking by street vendors (35%)

Table 4

Percentages of Stereotypical Chinese Behaviors in the 20 Films

Stereotypical Behavior	n	%
Smoking tobacco incessantly	9	45
Prostitution/having concubines	8	40
Inhumane behavior	8	40
Smoking opium	7	35
Hawking by street vendors	7	35
Gambling	6	30
Superstitious worship of Chinese temple Gods	6	30
Kung Fu or other martial arts	5	25
Pulling rikshas	4	20
Consulting fortune-tellers	3	15
Chinese coolie labors	1	5

All of these stereotypical behaviors were either improper (smoking tobacco incessantly, smoking opium, gambling, prostitution/having concubines, and inhumane behavior), superstitious (worshipping Chinese temple Gods, consulting fortune-tellers), or the work of poor people (pulling rikshas and performing coolie labor). *Broken Blossoms* (1919) is a good example of a film in which most of these negative stereotypical behaviors were depicted. In the film, men smoke tobacco and opium incessantly and gather in a small room for gambling; women consult fortune-tellers to learn their destiny; and poor people pull rikshas and sell things in the street. However,

when Kung Fu and martial arts became the new Chinese stereotypical behaviors in the early 1970s, depiction of negative behaviors decreased.

Principal Themes in the Films

Research Question 5 asked what the principal themes were in the 20 films. Table 5 shows that the most frequently occurring themes were mysterious Chinese or mysterious China (45%) and war (40%).

Table 5

Principal Themes in 20 Films

Principal Theme	n	%
Mysterious Chinese or China—culture differences	9	45
Subordination of women	9	45
War	8	40
Ambitious Chinese schemers	6	30
Chinese agents resolving criminal problems	5	25
Exotic Chinese women	5	25
Life of Chinese in America	5	25
Hardworking Chinese people	3	15
Prohibited love between Chinese and Caucasians	3	15
Criminal Chinatown	2	10
Communists	2	10

Clearly, Chinese women were often depicted as inferior to men or as subservient. A good example of the subordination of women theme was found in *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958). When the missionary Gladys Aylward (Ingrid Bergman) arrived in the city of Yang Cheng in a remote province of northern China, she experienced cultural shock from what she saw: a man who had many wives; women with bound feet; and a mother who wanted to sell her daughter because girls were not as valuable as boys. Although Gladys proudly stated that she had become a Chinese citizen, her reaction to the scenes of Chinese life presented in the film implied that China and the Chinese people were mysterious and backward.

As for the war theme, there were four different settings. Five of the eight films depicted the Chinese Civil War (1926-1949); three depicted the Sino-Japanese conflict during the Pacific War (1931-1945); one depicted the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901); and one depicted the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1912 by the Guomindang.

Chinatown Depictions

Research Question 6 asked whether Chinatown appears in the film, and if so, how it is depicted. There were only three films depicting Chinatown: *The Tong Man* (1919), *Flower Drum Song* (1961), and *Year of the Dragon* (1985). Table 6 shows how Chinatown was depicted in those films.

Table 6

Images of Chinatown in The Tong Man, Flower Drum Song, and Year of the Dragon

Images	n
Criminal	2
Crowded	2
Dirty	2
Disordered	2
Exotic	2
Mysterious	2
Noisy	2
Busy	1
Old and Worn	1
Traditional	1
Less Developed	0
Poor	0

In *The Tong Man* (1919), San Francisco's Chinatown was depicted as a criminal, dirty, disordered, old, worn, and mysterious place. The Chinese tongs engaged in opium smuggling, gambling, power struggles, and revengeful murders. In addition, the row houses in Chinatown looked old and worn, full of mystery.

In *Flower Drum Song* (1961), San Francisco's Chinatown was depicted more positively. People sang in the street, went to nightclubs to enjoy shows, and celebrated Chinese New Year by performing traditional Chinese acrobatics. This Chinatown was depicted as a busy, exciting, crowded, and exotic place.

Like *The Tong Man* of 1919, the *Year of the Dragon* (1985) depicted Chinatown as a criminal, disordered, and mysterious place. An uncorrupted lawman, Stanley White (Mickey Rourke), was assigned to clean up teenage violence—in this case, in New

York's Chinatown. His main adversary was a young gangster on the way up, Joey Tai (John Lone). The film began with a high-angle shot of a ceremonial lion head and pulled back to show lively, chaotic lion dancing, and drums characteristic of Chinese New Year celebrations. However, the next scene depicted the bloody execution of the Chinese gangster Jackie Wong, Tai's father-in-law. The Chinese tongs vied for more power and fortune by drug trafficking, gambling, killing, and even fighting the police. Each moment of spectacle—whether it was a festival, funeral, banquet, or bedroom scene—had a threatening edge. Underneath the picturesque veneer, Chinatown hid its violence and corruption.

Depictions of China

Research Question 7 asked whether China appears in the film, and if so, how it is depicted. Eleven films contained scenes set in China: *Broken Blossoms* (1919), *Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* (1929), *Shanghai Express* (1932), *The Good Earth* (1937), *Dragon Seed* (1944), *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958), *Kung Fu* (1972), *Enter the Dragon* (1973), *The Last Emperor* (1987), *The Joy Luck Club* (1993), and *Shanghai Knight* (2003). Table 7 shows how China was depicted in these films.

Table 7

Images of China in 11 Films

Images	n
Traditional	9
Crowded	7
Exotic	7
Mysterious	7
Old and Worn	7
Poor	5
Busy	4
Less Developed	3
Disordered	2
Noisy	2
Dirty	2
Criminal	0

For example, *The Last Emperor* (1987) contained the four most common of these images. The film depicted a dramatic biography of Pu Yi, who at the age of three was named the Emperor of China in the Forbidden City. At the end, he died as a gardener at the Botanical Gardens in Beijing in the People's Republic of China. Most of the scenes recreated Pu Yi's life as an emperor in the Forbidden City, where he was served by hundreds of eunuchs and servants. Under this feudal system, China is presented as traditional, exotic, and mysterious.

In general, the images of China tended to be less modern than those of Chinatown, but at the same time less criminal.

Job Positions of Chinese and Caucasian Characters

Research Question 8 asked what are the job positions of Chinese and Caucasian

characters. Job positions were examined to determine whether there was a difference in the prominence of Chinese and Caucasian characters. As can be seen in Table 8, the percentages of Caucasian males in high (55%) and middle-level (28%) job positions were more than double the percentages of Chinese males in high (24%) and middle-level (14%) positions. In addition, the percentages of Caucasian females in high (21%) and middle-level (21%) job positions were also higher than the percentages of Chinese females in high (12%) and middle-level (13%) positions. However, the percentages of Chinese males (23%) and females (19%) in low positions were, respectively, 3 and 2 times higher than those of Caucasian males (8%) and females (11%). In the Not Applicable categories, 14 male Chinese characters were criminals, as opposed to 2 Caucasian males. Four male Chinese characters were priests, as opposed to 1 Caucasian male. Fifteen of the Chinese female characters were housewives, as opposed to four Caucasian females. Five of the Chinese female characters were daughters, as opposed to 2 Caucasian females.

These results show that the job positions of Caucasian characters were much higher than those of Chinese characters, both for males and females.

Table 8

Percentages of Job Positions of Chinese and Caucasian Characters

Job Position	Male		Female	
	Chinese (n = 80)	Caucasian (n = 71)	Chinese (n = 52)	Caucasian (n = 19)
High	.24	.55	.12	.21
Middle-level	.14	.28	.13	.21
Low	.23	.08	.19	.11
Not Applicable	.28	.03	.46	.32
Unknown	.13	.06	.10	.16

Social Status of Chinese and Caucasian Characters

Research Question 9 asked what the social statuses of Chinese and Caucasian characters are. The percentage of Chinese and Caucasian males who were rich was the same (38%). But many more Caucasian males (48%) than Chinese males (26%) were middle-class. As for the female characters, 53% of the Caucasians were rich, as compared with 33% of the Chinese. However, only 16% of the Caucasians were middle-class, compared to 40% of the Chinese.

Table 9

Percentages of Social Status of Chinese and Caucasian Characters

Social Status	Male		Female	
	Chinese (n=80)	Caucasian (n=71)	Chinese (n=52)	Caucasian (n=19)
Rich	.38	.38	.33	.53
Middle Class	.26	.48	.40	.16
Poor	.31	.08	.19	.21
Not Applicable	.01	.01	.04	.00
Unknown	.05	.04	.02	.11

The results in the job position and social status categories confirm the power and wealth imbalance between Chinese (East) and Caucasian (West).

Story Depictions: Average Americans' Attitude Toward Chinese

Research Question 10 asked whether the story depicts average Americans' attitude toward Chinese. In the 20 films, 9 (45%) depicted average Americans' attitudes toward Chinese, of which 3 (33%) were positive, 6 (67%) were negative. Previous to *The One* (2001), *Charlie Chan in the Secret Service* (1944) was the only film that depicted positive American attitudes toward Chinese. Aside from leading roles, average Americans' attitudes toward Chinese were often very snobbish and discriminatory, as depicted, for example, in *Joy Luck Club* (1993). When Ted Jordan (Andrew McCarthy) introduced his new Chinese girlfriend, Rose (Rosalind Chao), to his parents, his mother said something really rude, thinking that, because Rose is Chinese, she is not good

enough for her son and their upper-class Caucasian family.

It is a surprising finding that average Americans' attitudes toward Chinese, as depicted in the sample films, were not positive until the twenty-first century.

Interestingly, three of the films depict British characters looking down on Chinese.

Box Office Appeals

Research Question 11 asked what makes the films appealing. The most frequently occurring appealing elements were famous movie stars (90%), movies based on successful books or plays (65%), and romantic or dramatic love stories (55%). In the early decades, Hollywood liked to use famous movie stars, most of them Caucasian, to play Chinese characters, and adapted stories from previously successful works to assure an audience for the films. For example, in *Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* (1929), which was based on Sax Rohmer's successful novel, the main character, Dr. Fu, was played by the famous Caucasian actor Warner Oland.

Table 10

Appealing Elements in 20 Films

Successful Elements	n	%
Famous movie stars	18	90
Based on a successful novel or play	13	65
Romantic or dramatic love story	11	55
Reflection of public concerns	8	40
Cultural interests	7	35
Exciting action-packed scenes	7	35
Reflection of current events	2	10
Suspenseful/mysterious plots	2	10

Sexual Attractions or Sexual Relationships

Research Question 12 asked whether there is sexual attraction or a sexual relationship, implicit or explicit, between Chinese and Caucasian characters—and if so, whether that relationship is depicted as positive or negative. Twelve of the 20 films (60%) depicted sexual attractions or sexual relationships between Chinese and Caucasian characters, of which 11 (55%) were explicit, and only one (5%) was implicit (as depicted in *Broken Blossoms* [1919]). In the 11 explicit sexual relationships, 7 (64%) were romances, 3 (27%) were rapes (as depicted in *The Thief of Bagdad* [1924], *Shanghai Express* [1932], and *Enter the Dragon* [1973]), and 1 (9%) was a conflicting relationship (as depicted in *Year of the Dragon* [1985]).

One example of a romance occurred in *The World of Suzie Wong*. When the American Robert Lomax (William Holden) got tired of working in an office and wanted to start a new life as an artist, he moved to Hong Kong to be a painter. He met Suzie Wong (Nancy Kwan) when he stayed in the hotel where she and other prostitutes, known as “Wanchai girls,” worked by soliciting sailors and businessmen in the bar. Although her profession at first kept him from being attracted to her, in the end he fell in love with her and married her.

An example of a rape occurred in *The Thief of Bagdad*. The Caliph of Bagdad offered to give his daughter in marriage to the suitor who brought back the rarest treasure after seven moons. The Mongol prince was invited to this competition, but he not only wanted to marry the princess but to dominate Bagdad. In the end, although he was defeated by the army of the thief, whom the princess loves, he still tried to rape the

princess and then tried to escape, but was only prevented from doing so by the thief.

An example of a conflicted relationship occurred in the *Year of the Dragon*. Tracy Tzu (Ariane) repelled Stanley (Mickey Rourke) in the beginning, but after he forcefully ripped off her clothes, she became willing to submit to him and even loved him. After having sexual relations with her for a while, Stanley went back to his wife, Connie, and told her that he still loved her more than anyone else in the world. But after his wife was murdered, Stanley went back to Tracy.

Depictions of Sexual Relationships with Caucasian Women

Research Question 13 asked whether Chinese men are depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Caucasian women. Only four of the films (20%) depicted sexual relationships between both Caucasian women and men and Caucasian women and Chinese men: *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), *Shanghai Express* (1932), *Enter the Dragon* (1973), and *Shanghai Knight* (2003). In *The Thief of Bagdad*, *Shanghai Express*, and *Enter the Dragon*, Chinese men were depicted as bad guys trying to abduct and rape Caucasian women, whereas the Caucasian men were all nice guys who were ultimately chosen as lovers by the Caucasian women. Only in *Shanghai Knight* were Chinese men depicted favorably and treated the same as Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Caucasian women. Chon Wang (Jackie Chan) and Roy (Owen Wilson) headed to London to find the rebel who murdered Wang's father and shook up Victorian Britain in the process. One night, in their hotel, Roy and Wang had fun with many sexy Caucasian girls. They laughed and had pillow fights, with no difference between the Chinese and Caucasian men.

In three other films—*Broken Blossoms* (1919), *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958), and *The One* (2001)—there were sexual attractions or relationships between Chinese men and Caucasian women, but no sexual attractions or relationships between Caucasian men and Caucasian women. In these three films, Chinese men were very tender with and loyal to Caucasian women. For example, in *Broken Blossoms* (1919), Cheng Huan, a disillusioned shopkeeper in London's Limehouse district, meets Lucy Burrows, the abused child of boxer "Battling" Burrows, and protects her when another Oriental, Evil Eye, grabs her. After Burrows whips Lucy mercilessly when she spills soup on his hand, she wanders the streets and falls unconscious into Cheng Huan's shop. He washes her wounds and dresses her as a princess, and she experiences happiness for the first time.

In *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958), Captain Lin Nan, a Chinese soldier who speaks English, meets English missionary Gladys Aylward in the remote city of Yang Cheng. After a while, he becomes attracted to her and consults the local Mandarin (the ruler of the district) for advice. The Mandarin, deciding to play the role of matchmaker, sends Gladys a flattering dress and invites her to dinner with Lin. At the dinner, Lin and Gladys are smitten with each other, but the evening is interrupted when news comes that Japanese troops are massing at the border. Before reporting for duty to the army, Lin confesses to Gladys that he has fallen in love with her. Soon after, Japanese planes bomb the city. When the Mandarin announces that Japanese troops are near, he orders the villagers to seek refuge in the mountains. Before riding off to battle, Lin kisses Gladys and promises to love her as long as he lives.

In *The One* (2001), Gabe (Jet Li), a policeman, had a lovely Caucasian wife, T. K. (Carla Gugino), to whom he is very loving. After T. K. was killed by the movie's villain, Yulaw, Gabe vowed to go after him. At the end, Gabe and another policeman arrested him and brought him back to the central universe for his punishment. Then Gabe was sent back to the time when he and T. K. first met. This is, in fact, the only happy ending for a love relationship between a Chinese man and a Caucasian woman in all 20 films. Interestingly, there are four films in which a love relationship ends happily between a Chinese woman and a Caucasian man: *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960), *Year of the Dragon* (1985), *The Joy Luck Club* (1993), and *Shanghai Knight* (2003).

Depictions of Sexual Relationships with Chinese Women

Research Question 14 asked whether Chinese men are depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Chinese women. Three films (15%) related to this question. In two films, *Year of the Dragon* (1985) and *The Joy Luck Club* (1993), Chinese men were depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Chinese women. In one film, *Enter the Dragon* (1973), Chinese men were depicted the same.

In *The Joy Luck Club* (1993), the Chinese ex-husband of Lena (Lauren Tom), is stingy and self-righteous, and the Chinese ex-husband of Waverly (Tamlyn Tomita) is totally incompatible with her. Later, Lena and Waverly both have new American lovers, who are very tender and kind to them. This suggests that Caucasian men were nicer than Chinese men in their relationships with Chinese women.

Depictions of Sexual Relationships with Caucasian Men

Research Question 15 asked whether Chinese women are depicted differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Caucasian men. Seven films (35%) related to this question. In two of these, *Enter the Dragon* (1973) and *Shanghai Knight* (2003), Chinese women were treated differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Caucasian men; but in the first of these, Chinese women were treated worse than Caucasian women, and in the second, they were treated better.

In *Enter the Dragon*, Su Lin (Angela Mao), Lee's (Bruce Lee's) sister, was abducted by an American bodyguard named O'Hara (Bob Wall). Rather than submit to him, she committed suicide, and at her gravesite Lee vowed revenge for her death.

In *Shanghai Knight*, Chon Wang's sister, Chon Lin (Fann Wong), loved Roy, a Caucasian man, at first sight. Although Roy had formerly been a playboy, with many Caucasian girlfriends, he refused Caucasian women's seductive offers after he met Lin, and proved his bravery and his friendship to Chon Wang. Roy and Lin eventually ended up together.

In the other five films, Chinese women were treated the same romantically as Caucasian women by Caucasian men: *Love is a Many-Splendored Thing* (1955), *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960), *Year of the Dragon* (1985), *The Joy Luck Club* (1993), and *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997). In four of these, Chinese women were treated as well as Caucasian women. In *Year of the Dragon*, Chinese reporter Tracy Tzu, Stanley White's girlfriend, was treated as poorly as Connie White, Stanley's wife.

It is surprising that Chinese women were so independent when they encountered

Caucasian men. As shown in Table 11, the most frequently occurring female characteristics were loyalty (86%) and independence (86%). A good example of this can be found in *Tomorrow Never Dies* (2001). When a British battleship is sunk in the South China Sea, and its deadly payload is stolen, James Bond (Pierce Brosnan) was sent to investigate and to prevent a possible World War III. The Chinese government also wanted to know what was happening, so they dispatched their stunning yet lethal female agent, Wai Lin (Michelle Yeoh), to find out the truth. In the end, after completing the mission, Bond and Wai Lin kissed with passion as they floated on the ocean, acknowledging their romantic attraction after saving the world. Such portrayals of modern Chinese women with Caucasian men suggest that they have come a long way since the traditional Chinese women in the mold of O-Lan (*The Good Earth* [1937]).

Table 11

Top 10 Depictions When Chinese Women Encounter Caucasian Men in 7 Films

Depictions	n	%
Loyal	6	86
Independent	6	86
Submissive	5	71
Virtuous	5	71
Willing	5	71
Sexy	5	71
Tender	5	71
Restrained	4	57
Seductive	3	43
Tolerant	3	43

Depictions of Sexual Relationships with Chinese Men

Research Question 16 asked whether Chinese women are depicted differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Chinese men. Two films (10%) related to this question. In one of these, *Shanghai Express* (1932), Chinese women were treated differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Chinese men. In the other film, *Enter the Dragon* (1973), Chinese women and Caucasian women were treated the same.

In *Shanghai Express*, a Chinese prostitute, Hui Fei (Anna May Wong), was flirted with by Chinese men and was raped by Henry Chang (Warner Oland), the leader of rebel troops. On the other hand, a Caucasian prostitute, Shanghai Lily (Marlene Dietrich), who was very notorious along the China coast, was protected by Captain Donald Harvey (Clive Brooks) when Chang intended to rape her. This suggests that Chinese women were in a lower position than Caucasian women, even if they were prostitutes.

In *Enter the Dragon*, Lee (Bruce Lee), a member of a Shaolin Temple, was asked by Braithwaite (Geoffrey Weeks), a British law officer, to go to a tri-annual martial arts tournament held on an island owned by Han (Kien Shih), a reclusive billionaire who was once a member of the Temple but has now become a renegade. Braithwaite believed that Han used his tournaments as a cover for narcotics and prostitution activities. During the tournament, there were many Chinese and Caucasian prostitutes on the island, so Lee could choose to sleep with any he liked. Thus, no differences were shown between Chinese and Caucasian women in sexual relationships with men.

Other Depictions of Chinese and Caucasian Characters

Research Question 17 asked whether, aside from sexual or romantic relationships, Chinese characters were treated differently from Caucasian characters. In 6 of the 20 films (30%), Chinese characters were treated worse than Caucasian characters; in 1 of the films (5%), Caucasian characters were treated worse than Chinese characters; in 9 of the films (45%), there were no differences in treatment; and in 4 of the films (20%), this question was not applicable because there were no Caucasians in the story. Most of the Chinese characters in the last category were in high job positions, such as Charlie Chan in *Charlie Chan in the Secret Service* (1944) or the Mongol prince in *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924).

An example of how Chinese characters were treated worse than Caucasians is *Kung Fu* (1972). In this film, set in the late nineteenth century, a Chinese-American character, Kwai Chang Caine (David Carradine), was raised in a Shaolin monastery and trained by the monks to be a Shaolin master. Against all forms of violence, he faced his ultimate challenge when his preferred master was killed by the imperial forces. After avenging the death of his teacher, he fled China to the American West and worked on the transcontinental railroad, helping out the Chinese workers there. When Caine walked into a bar, people were very unfriendly to him, and one Caucasian man prevented him from getting a drink. The other Chinese railroad workers were also being persecuted by their Caucasian supervisors, who did not care if the workers were sick or hungry, but just wanted to get as much work out of them as they could to meet their deadlines.

Interestingly, in one of the films, *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958), a

Caucasian character was treated worse than the Chinese characters. When English missionary Gladys (Ingrid Bergman) arrived in Yang Cheng, she tried to learn her way around the city. At one point, when she saw a girl crying on the street, Gladys held the toddler to comfort her. When the child's mother saw this, she was furious and wanted to beat Gladys. "Foreign devil," she shouted, "why are you holding my baby?"

Derogatory Terms Caucasian Characters Used to Call Chinese Characters

Research Question 18 asked what words, if any, Caucasian characters use to refer to Chinese characters. Of the 20 films, five films used inappropriate words to refer to Chinese characters. In *Broken Blossoms* (1919), the prizefighter (Donald Crisp) was very angry when he found out that his daughter was being cared for by a Chinese man, whom he a "chink" and "yellow man." In *Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* (1929), the Caucasian characters used the terms "Chinaman," "Oriental Horde," and "Dragon murder." In *Shanghai Express* (1932), Caucasian characters also used "Chinaman." In *Kung Fu* (1972), an arrogant American man in a bar prevented Caine, a Chinese-American Shaolin monk, from getting a drink at the bar and called him "Yellow" and "a little slant-eyed." When *Year of the Dragon* (1985) came out, the Chinese American community protested that the film presented an inaccurate and stereotyped image of Chinatown (Marchetti, 1991). In the film, police officer Stanley White (Mickey Rourke) told Chinese reporter Tracy (Ariane), "The first time I saw you, I hated your guts. I think I even hated you before I met you. I hated you on TV. I hated you in Vietnam." He also used the terms "Chink," "Yellow," "Chinese yellow nigger," "a little slant-eyed," and "snot-nosed Chinks" to refer to Chinese characters.

Principal Chinese Characters: Happy or Unhappy Endings

Research Question 19 asked whether the film ends happily or sadly for the principal Chinese character(s). *The Good Earth* (1937) was the first of the 20 films to end happily for the principal Chinese characters. Prior to that, four films ended on a sad note and one had a mixed ending. Cheng Huan in *Broken Blossoms* (1919) and Dr. Fu Manchu in *Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* (1929) both committed suicide at the end of their films. Henry Chang was killed by the Chinese prostitute Hui Fei as revenge his rape of her in *Shanghai Express* (1932). The Mongol Prince was defeated by the Bagdad thief's army in *The thief of Bagdad* (1924). The mixed example occurred in *The Tong Man* (1919), when San Francisco gangster Luk Chan, his lover Sen Chee, and his friend Lucero boarded a ship bound for China after killing the leader of the Bo Sing Tong gang. Between 1937 and 1987, six of the films ended happily for the principal Chinese characters, four ended mixed, and one ended sadly. After 1987, all four films ended happily (Table 12).

Table 12

The Ending of the 20 Films

How the Film Ends	n	%
Happily	10	50
Sadly	5	25
Mixed	5	25
Total	20	100

How Average Americans Would View Chinese After Seeing the Films

Research Question 20 asked how American viewers would be expected to view Chinese after seeing the films—positively, negatively, or mixed. After taking into consideration the positive and negative Chinese images, the researcher determined how average Americans would view Chinese after seeing each film. Table 13 shows the results.

Table 13

Average Americans' Views of Chinese After Seeing the 20 Films

Views	n	%
Positive	13	65
Negative	4	20
Mixed	3	15
Total	20	100

Prior to *The Good Earth* (1937), four of the films (*The Tong Man* [1919], *The Thief of Bagdad* [1924], *Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu* [1929], and *Shanghai Express* [1932]) left American audiences with negative views of Chinese characters, while one (*Broken Blossoms*) left them with mixed views. After *The Good Earth*, the characterization of Chinese characters is either positive or mixed.

The Tong Man portrays all Chinese men as drug dealers, gamblers, and murderers.

In *The Thief of Bagdad*, the Mongol prince and his male and female assistants, who are the only Chinese characters, are portrayed as power-hungry invaders and rapists. In *Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu*, Fu Manchu is portrayed as a mad scientist and murderer, and the only other Chinese characters in the film are his willing subordinates. In *Shanghai Express*, all the Chinese characters are either bandits or servants. The only exception is the character played by Anna May Wong, who is a prostitute.

In *Broken Blossoms*, Cheng Huan (Richard Barthelmess) was very tender and kind-hearted in taking care of the poor girl, Lucy; however, as a Chinese man, his body language and the appearance were too feminine. Consequently, Americans would probably have mixed emotions after seeing this film. Two other films gave mixed portrayals of Chinese characters (*Enter the Dragon* [1973] and *Year of the Dragon* [1985]), and the rest were all positive.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The findings for 20 research questions provided an explanation of the two overall research questions: How were Chinese portrayed in major Hollywood films and how have their stereotypical portrayals changed during the period from 1910-2005? The most important findings are discussed below:

Chinese Portrayals in Major Hollywood Films

Chinese Characters in Hollywood Films

The study showed the extent to which Chinese actors were shut out of roles in Hollywood films. In the silent films and black and white eras, Chinese actors were played by Caucasians. In this study, it was not until 1960s, when a Chinese actress was given a leading role as a Chinese character; 13 years later, a Chinese male actor was given a leading role as a Chinese character.

The first Chinese actress to play a Chinese leading female role was Nancy Kwan, in *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960). Nancy Kwan also starred as the lead female in *Flower Drum Song* (1961). From 1919 to 1955, all 5 (25%) of the Chinese female leading roles were played by Caucasian actresses.

The first Chinese male leading role to be played by a Chinese actor did not appear until 1973 when Bruce Lee starred in *Enter the Dragon*. After 1973, all six Chinese male leading characters were played by Chinese actors.

Job Positions and Social Status of Chinese and Caucasian Characters

With respect to power imbalance, the findings indicated that the percentage of Caucasian men in high and middle-level job positions were more than double the percentage of Chinese men in high and middle-level positions. In addition, the percentage of Caucasian women in high and middle-level job positions was also higher than the percentage of Chinese women in high and middle-level positions. However, the percentage of Chinese characters in low positions were, respectively, three and two times higher than those of Caucasian characters.

There was also an imbalance in the social status between Chinese and Caucasian characters. The percentage of Chinese and Caucasian men who were rich was the same. But many more Caucasian men than Chinese men were middle-class. As for female characters, the percentage of Caucasians who were rich was much higher than for Chinese. However, a much lower percentage of Caucasian women were middle-class, as compared with Chinese women. Results in the job position and social status categories provided confirmation that there was a power and wealth imbalance between Chinese and Caucasians.

Portrayal of Sexual Relations between Chinese and Caucasian Characters

Twelve of the 20 films depicted sexual attractions or sexual relationships between Chinese and Caucasian characters. Only four of the films depicted sexual attractions and sexual relationships between both Caucasian women and men and Caucasian women and Chinese men: *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), *Shanghai Express* (1932), *Enter the Dragon* (1973), and *Shanghai Knight* (2003). In *The Thief of Bagdad*, *Shanghai*

Express, and *Enter the Dragon*, Chinese men were depicted as antagonists who were trying to abduct and rape Caucasian women, whereas the Caucasian characters were nice and decent men who were ultimately chosen as lovers by the Caucasian women. Only in *Shanghai Knight* were Chinese men depicted favorably and treated equally as Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Caucasian women. In three other films—*Broken Blossoms* (1919), *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958), and *The One* (2001)—there were sexual relationships between Chinese men and Caucasian women. In these three films, Chinese men were very tender with and loyal to Caucasian women.

Of the 12 films, only *The One* (2001) has the only happy ending for a love relationship between a Chinese man and a Caucasian woman. Interestingly, there are four films in which a love relationship ends happily between a Chinese woman and a Caucasian man: *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960), *Year of the Dragon* (1985), *The Joy Luck Club* (1993), and *Shanghai Knight* (2003).

Changes of Stereotypical Images during the Period from 1910-2005

The changes of stereotypical images of Chinese characters have come a long way in the last century; for the men, from the effeminate Cheng Huan played by Richard Barthelmess in *Broken Blossoms* (1919) to the martial arts master Lee played by Bruce Lee in *Enter the Dragon* (1973); for the women, from the slave girls and prostitutes played by Anna May Wong (*The Thief of Bagdad*, 1924; *Shanghai Express*, 1932) to the star reporter played by Ariane Koizumi in *Year of the Dragon* (1985). Table 14 summarizes the major milestones achieved over time, as represented by the 20 films reviewed and analyzed in this study.

Table 14
Milestones in the Portrayal of Chinese Characters

<i>Year</i>	<i>Milestones</i>
1919	<p>First year, with <i>Broken Blossoms</i>, that a Chinese man is portrayed as sexually attracted to a Caucasian woman (Cheng Huan, played by the Caucasian actor Richard Barthelmess, adores Lucy Burrows, played by Lillian Gish).</p> <p>First year in which a Chinese male leading role is portrayed sympathetically (Cheng Huan played by Richard Barthelmess in <i>Broken Blossoms</i>).</p> <p>First year in which Chinatown is portrayed unsympathetically (San Francisco's Chinatown in <i>The Tong Man</i>)</p>
1924	First year in which a female major supporting role is played by a Chinese actress (the Mongol slave played by Anna May Wong in <i>The Thief of Bagdad</i>)
1932	First year in which a Chinese woman is portrayed as a prostitute (Hui Fei played by Anna May Wong in <i>Shanghai Express</i>)
1937	First year in which a female minor supporting role is played by a Chinese actress (the Little Bride played by Mary Wong in <i>The Good Earth</i>)
1944	First year in which a male major supporting role is played by a Chinese actor (Tommie Chan, Charlie Chan's son, played by Benson Fong in <i>Charlie Chan in the Secret Service</i>).
1955	<p>First year, with <i>Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing</i>, that a romantic relationship is portrayed between a Chinese woman (Dr. Han Suyin played by the Caucasian actress Jennifer Jones) and a Caucasian man (Mark Elliott played by William Holden).</p> <p>First year, with <i>Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing</i>, that a Chinese female leading role is portrayed as an independent woman in a respectable profession (Dr. Han Suyin played by Jennifer Jones).</p> <p>From this year on, beginning with <i>Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing</i>, all male minor supporting roles are played by Chinese actors.</p>
1958	First year, with <i>The Inn of the Sixth Happiness</i> , that a romantic relationship is portrayed between a Chinese man (Capt. Lin Nan played by the Caucasian actor Curt Jurgens) and a Caucasian woman (Mrs. Gladys Aylward played by Ingrid Bergman).

Table 14 (cont'd)
Milestones in the Portrayal of Chinese Characters

1960	First year in which a female leading role is played by a Chinese actress (Suzie Wong played by Nancy Kwan in <i>The World of Suzie Wong</i>).
1961	From this year on, beginning with <i>Flower Drum Song</i> , all male major supporting roles are played by Chinese actors. First year in which Chinatown is portrayed sympathetically (San Francisco's Chinatown in <i>Flower Drum Song</i>).
1972	First year in which a martial arts film is produced (<i>Kung Fu</i> , in which the Chinese male leading role, Kwai Chang Caine, is played by the Caucasian actor David Carradine).
1973	First year in which a male leading role is played by a Chinese actor (Lee played by Bruce Lee in <i>Enter the Dragon</i>). First year in which all the Chinese roles in a film are played by Chinese actors and actresses (<i>Enter the Dragon</i>). First year in which Caucasian men are portrayed raping Chinese women (<i>Enter the Dragon</i>). From this year on, beginning with <i>Enter the Dragon</i> , all female major supporting roles are played by Chinese actresses.
1985	First year in which there is a love scene with a nude Chinese female character (Tracy Tzu played by the Japanese-American actress Ariane Koizumi in <i>Year of the Dragon</i>).
2001	<i>The One</i> has the only happy ending for a love relationship between a Chinese man and a Caucasian woman in all 20 films.
2003	<i>Shanghai Knight</i> is the only one of the 20 films in which Chinese men are treated the same as Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Caucasian women.

Contributions to the Literature

In this study, 20 major Hollywood films, two per decade between 1910 and 2005, were examined to determine how Chinese characters were portrayed and how their stereotypical portrayals have changed over time. The study began in 1919 with D. W. Griffith's *Broken Blossoms* and ends in 2003 with Jackie Chan's *Shanghai Knight*. The nature and purpose of stereotypes as well as interracial interactions and relationships depicted between Chinese and Caucasian characters was systematically studied in a content analysis. In addition, through examining different elements in the film, the study has also provided an in-depth understanding of how Chinese characters was depicted in each film.

Previous studies on Chinese portrayals in Hollywood films were badly out of date, the thesis filled the gap in the literature because the analysis has included a broader range of films from older silent movies to more recently-produced major Hollywood films. The most important conclusion is that stereotypical characterizations have decreased over time to a point where that, by today, they have largely disappeared.

Limitations of this Study

The principal limitations of this study are that there were very few films with Chinese characters in the earlier decades, and numerous films in more recent decades. Therefore, reviewing two films per decade was highly representative in the early part of the century, but progressively less so with the passage of time.

Another limitation is that the information about characters in a film was not always complete, so it was sometimes difficult to code certain character features, such as job

position and social status.

There is also an inherent problem of subjectivity in deciding, for example, how sympathetic a character or a behavior was. To some degree, however, this problem was overcome by the high relatively intercoder reliability that was achieved.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX: CODING SHEET

Name of Film (year released) _____ ()

Plot summary:

1. *List the Chinese characters in the film by the categories below. Are they presented as very sympathetic, sympathetic, neutral, unsympathetic, or very unsympathetic? Are they played by Chinese (chi) actors, Caucasian (cau) actors, other Asians (e.g., jp indicates Japanese, aa indicates African American), or other (e.g., aa indicates African American)?*

Gender Roles	Males				Females			
	Number of roles	Name of the role	Sympathetic level	Race	Number of roles	Name of the role	Sympathetic level	Race
Leading Roles								
Major Supporting roles								
Minor Supporting Roles								
Extras (approx.)								

2. *Is the depiction of Chinese characters positive, negative, mixed, or neutral? If positive, what principle positive qualities do the characters have? (For example, physically attractive, intellectually superior, morally superior, physically strong, brave, aggressive, honest, tolerant, kind, etc.) If negative, what principle negative qualities do the Chinese characters have? (For example, physically unattractive, intellectually inferior, morally inferior, physically weak, cowardly, passive, dishonest, intolerant, mean-spirited, etc.) If mixed, what positive and negative qualities do the Chinese characters have? Neutral indicates that the characters are not well enough to make a judgment, or can not be defined as either positive or negative.*

<i>Name of the Role</i>	<i>Depiction</i>	<i>Positive Qualities</i>	<i>Negative Qualities</i>

3. In terms of leading and supporting Chinese roles, what stereotypes are used?

Male	Female
☐ Hardworking	☐ Hardworking
☐ Tradition-loving	☐ Tradition-Loving
☐ Loyal to family ties	☐ Loyal to family ties
☐ Meditative	☐ Meditative
☐ Courteous	☐ Courteous
☐ Extremely nationalistic	☐ Extremely nationalistic
☐ Restrained	☐ Restrained
☐ Clever	☐ Clever
☐ Righteous	☐ Righteous
☐ Submissive	☐ Submissive
☐ Modest	☐ Modest
☐ Exotic	☐ Exotic
☐ Sexy	☐ Sexy
☐ Quiet	☐ Quiet
☐ Superstitious	☐ Superstitious
☐ Sly	☐ Sly
☐ Conservative	☐ Conservative
☐ Reserved	☐ Reserved
☐ Religious	☐ Religious
☐ Humorless	☐ Humorless
☐ Ignorant	☐ Ignorant
☐ Deceitful	☐ Deceitful
☐ Devious	☐ Devious
☐ Evil	☐ Evil
☐ Mysterious	☐ Mysterious
☐ Ambitious	☐ Ambitious
☐ Cruel	☐ Cruel
☐ Virtuous	☐ Virtuous
☐ Plain	☐ Plain
☐ Tolerant	☐ Tolerant
☐ Tender	☐ Tender
☐ Other	☐ Other

Source: Adapted from Arthur G. Miller (1982), Table 1.1, pp.13 Percentage of Princeton Students Assigning Traits to Chinese group: 1933, 1951, 1967 and the most popular Chinese character's image.

4. *What stereotypical Chinese behaviors, if any, are depicted?*

- ☐ Chinese coolie labors
- ☐ Consulting fortune-tellers
- ☐ Gambling
- ☐ Hawking by street vendors
- ☐ Inhumane behavior
- ☐ Kung Fu or other martial arts
- ☐ Prostitution/ Having Concubines
- ☐ Pulling rikshas
- ☐ Smoking tobacco incessantly
- ☐ Smoking Opium.
- ☐ Superstitious worship of Chinese temple Gods

5. *Does the film contain any of the following themes listed below? (Check any that apply.)*

- ☐ War
- ☐ Communists
- ☐ Mysterious Chinese or China— cultural differences
- ☐ Criminal Chinatown
- ☐ Exotic Chinese women
- ☐ Hardworking Chinese people
- ☐ Prohibited love between Chinese and Caucasians
- ☐ Ambitious Chinese schemers
- ☐ Life of Chinese in America
- ☐ Chinese agents resolving criminal problems

Source: Adapted from Chen (2000), pp.13 Seven Themes about Chinese Characters in Early American films.

If the film contains war theme, which war narrative is it?

- ☐ War narrative –Chinese Civil War, 1926-1949
- ☐ War narrative –Sino-Japanese Conflict, 1937-1945
- ☐ War narrative –Boxer Rebellion, 1899-1901
- ☐ War narrative –Kuomintang overthrew the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty, 1912

6. *Does Chinatown appear in the film?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, how is it depicted?

- ☐ Busy
- ☐ Criminal
- ☐ Crowded
- ☐ Dirty
- ☐ Traditional
- ☐ Noisy
- ☐ Disordered
- ☐ Old and worn
- ☐ Exotic
- ☐ Mysterious
- ☐ Less developed
- ☐ Poor

7. *Does China appear in the film?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, how is it depicted?

- ☐ Busy
- ☐ Traditional
- ☐ Crowded
- ☐ Dirty
- ☐ Exotic
- ☐ Noisy
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Less developed
- ☐ Disordered
- ☐ Old and worn
- ☐ Mysterious

8. *Is there sexual attraction or a sexual relationship between Chinese women and Caucasian men in the film?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

If yes, how are Chinese women depicted when they encounter Caucasian men?

- ☐ Sexy
- ☐ Sly
- ☐ Appetite for white men
- ☐ Seductive
- ☐ Sensual
- ☐ Unlimited desire
- ☐ Sexual promise
- ☐ More or less stupid (Ignorant)
- ☐ Willing
- ☐ Cruel
- ☐ Untrustworthy
- ☐ Restrained
- ☐ Tradition-loving
- ☐ Submissive
- ☐ Virtuous
- ☐ Naive
- ☐ Plain
- ☐ Loyal
- ☐ Tolerant
- ☐ Quiet
- ☐ Tender
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Independent
- ☐ Dominant
- ☐ Passive
- ☐ Shy
- ☐ Aggressive
- ☐ Other _____

9. Is there sexual attraction or a sexual relationship between Chinese men and Caucasian women in the film?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

If yes, how are Chinese men depicted when they encounter Caucasian women?

- ☐ Sly
- ☐ Devious
- ☐ Violent
- ☐ Impolite
- ☐ Appetite for white women
- ☐ Seductive
- ☐ Unlimited desire
- ☐ Sexual harassment
- ☐ Cruel
- ☐ Dominant
- ☐ Untrustworthy
- ☐ Restrained
- ☐ Nervous
- ☐ Submissive
- ☐ Willing
- ☐ Gentle
- ☐ Shy
- ☐ Loyal
- ☐ Tolerant
- ☐ Quiet
- ☐ Tender
- ☐ Aggressive
- ☐ Other _____

10. What is the job position of Chinese and Caucasian characters in the film?

<i>Chinese Characters</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Middle-level</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>	<i>unknown</i>

<i>Caucasian Characters</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>	<i>unknown</i>

11. *What is the social status of Chinese and Caucasian characters in the film?*

<i>Chinese Characters</i>	<i>Rich</i>	<i>Middle-Class</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>	<i>unknown</i>

<i>Caucasian Characters</i>	<i>Rich</i>	<i>Middle-Class</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>	<i>unknown</i>

12. *Was the film released in the same time era as depicted in the plot? .*

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Does the plot indicate the Sino-American relations or depict the Americans' attitude toward Chinese?

Indicate Sino-American relations?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Depict the average Americans' attitude toward Chinese?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, the attitude is depicted as positive or negative?

- ☐ Positive
☐ Negative

Comments, if any:

13. *Which of the following elements does the film contain that contributed to its success:*

- ☐ Reflection of current events
☐ Reflection of public concerns
☐ Cultural interests
☐ Romantic or dramatic love story
☐ Based on a successful novel or play
☐ Famous movie stars
☐ Suspenseful/mysterious plots
☐ Exciting action-packed scenes

14. *Is there sexual attraction or a sexual relationship between Chinese and Caucasian characters? If yes, is the attraction or relationship explicit or implicit?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

- ☐ *Explicit (Show or imply real physical touch, or love vow)*
- ☐ *Implicit (Doesn't show or imply real physical touch, or love vow)*

If explicit, what type of relationship is it?

- ☐ Romance
- ☐ Seduction
- ☐ Prostitution
- ☐ Rape

Comments, if any:

15. *Are Chinese men depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Caucasian women?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

If yes, explain the differences or comments, if any:

16. *Are Chinese men depicted differently from Caucasian men in their sexual relationships with Chinese women?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

If yes, explain the differences:

17. *Are Chinese women treated differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Caucasian men?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

If yes, explain the differences:

18. *Are Chinese women treated differently from Caucasian women in their sexual relationships with Chinese men?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

If yes, explain the differences:

19. *Aside from sexual or romantic relationships, whether or not Chinese characters are treated differently from Caucasian characters.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

If yes, explain the differences:

20. *What words do Caucasian characters use to refer to Chinese characters?*

- ☐ Chink
- ☐ Yellow
- ☐ Chinaman
- ☐ Yellow Nigger
- ☐ Scumbag
- ☐ A little slant-eyed
- ☐ Punk
- ☐ Snot-nosed Chinks
- ☐ Oriental Horde
- ☐ Dragon murder
- ☐ None

21. *Does the film end happily or sadly for the principal Chinese character(s)?*

- ☐ Happily
- ☐ Sadly
- ☐ Mixed

Comments, if any:

22. *How viewers would be expected to view Chinese after seeing this film? Positively, negatively, or mixed?*

- ☐ Positive
- ☐ Negative
- ☐ Mixed

Please explain: